



## FARAS-NĀMA

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**FARAS-NĀMA**, Persian term for a category of books and manuals dealing with horses and horsemanship. Topics treated in this literary genre include horse-breeding, grazing, dressage, veterinary advice, horseracing and betting, and the art of divination based on the mien and movements of horses.

Persian literature in general abounds with references to horses (see ASB). There are special sections devoted to them in medieval encyclopaedias, mirrors for princes, and manuals of warfare as well as in poetry. Horses are a favorite topos in *qaṣīdas* in particular, both in the *nasīb* (ʿAwfī, *Lobāb* II, pp. 114-17) and as the gift requested by the poet from the subject of the panegyric. All these, however, fall outside the scope of this article, which will deal exclusively with Persian monographs on horses and the influences from other languages and cultures on their composition.

*Faras-nāmas* have appeared under such specific titles as *Anīs al-mosāfer*, *Kanz al-hedāya*, *Ḳayl-nāma*, *Maḥāsen al-ḥeṣān*, *Mezmār-e dāneš*, *Rāḥela-ye tawfiq*, *Rāḥat al-faras*, *Samand-e dawlat*, *Ṭebb al-afrās*, and *Toḥfat al-ṣadr* while others are simply entitled *Faras-nāma*. A large number of books on horses also exists in Arabic under the general title of *Ketāb al-ḳayl* (Ebn al-Nadīm, tr. Dodge, II, pp. 737-39; Hammer-Purgstall; Mercier; Ritter). A comprehensive bibliography of Persian *faras-nāmas* has yet to be compiled, but there are some partial listings (*al-Darīʿa* XVI, pp. 168-72; Storey II, pt. 3, pp. 394-402; Monzawī, *Nosḳahā* I, pp. 440-44; Monzawī, 1983, pp. 446-545; Solṭanī Gordfarāmarzī, in *EIr* II, p. 736).



‘Abd-Allāh Ṣafī’s *Faras-nāma*, also called the Bahmanī *faras-nāma*, written in 810/1407-8 (Storey II/3, p. 395; Huda, pp. 152-53) preserves what it is purported to be a chapter from a lost Ghaznavid *faras-nāma*. However, the earliest complete *faras-nāma* in Persian is perhaps the *Faras-nāma* of a certain Moḥammad b. Moḥammad b. Zangī, also known as Qayyem Nehāvandī. It may date to the sixth/twelfth century since it contains references to such historical figures as Šaraf-al-Dīn Mowaffaq Gerd-Bāzū, ‘Ezz-al-Dīn Satmāz, and Zayn-al-Dīn ‘Alī Kūčak (on whom see Camb. Hist. Iran V, pp. 176-77). The unique manuscript of this work, comprising fifty-four chapters, is in the Genel Kütüphanesi in Bursa, Turkey.

*Faras-nāmas* in Persian may be divided into five categories:

1. A work attributed to Aristotle and supposedly written at the behest of Alexander the Great. This short treatise, which survives in a number of manuscripts, probably went through several changes and emendations after it was translated from Arabic. The text and a facsimile of one of the manuscripts has been published by Ḥasan Tājbaḳš (*Tārīḳ-e dāmpzezeškī wa pezeškī-e Īrān I*, Tehran 1372 Š./1993, pp. 414-28).

2. *Faras-nāmas* which have been translated directly from Arabic into Persian, such as *‘Erfān al-ḳoyūl* (Monzawī, *Nosḳahā I*, pp. 436-37) and *Kāmel al-ṣenā‘atayn* (Storey II/3, p. 397, no. 665).

3. *Faras-nāmas* written in India and reportedly based on Hindu or Sanskrit sources. They include the *Faras-nāma-ye hāšemī* by Zayn-al-‘Ābedīn Ḥosaynī Hašemī, written in 926/1520 (Huda, *passim*; Storey II/3, p. 395, no. 663), and the *Toḥfat al-ṣadr* by Šadr-al-Dīn Moḥammad Khan b. Zebardast Khan (fl. 1135 /1722-23; Storey II/3, p. 398, no. 672). Some of these manuals are copiously illustrated (e.g., Anand Rām Mokleš *Rāḥat al-faras*, MS New York, Public Library, Spencer Indo-Pers. no. 33; *Rāḥat al-ferās*, MS London, British Library, Or. 5762; *Sālhūtār* or *Ketāb-e asb-nāma*, MSS London, British Library, Or. 6704, Or. 11918; see Schmitz, pp. 178-79; Meredith-Owens, p. 30).

4. *Faras-nāmas* originally written in Persian rather than being translated or adapted from other languages, such as the *Faras-nāma* or *Asb-nāma* of Moḥammad b. Moḥammad Wāse‘ī in 767/1365-66 for Noṣrat b. Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Bā-Kālanjār (MS Tehran, *Ketāb -ḳāna-ye Malek*, no. 5754; *Fehrest-e ketābhā-ye ḳaṭṭī-ye Ketāb-ḳāna-ye Mellī-e Malek III*, p. 575; *al-Darī‘a XVI*, p. 170, no. 499; Storey II/3, p. 397, no. 667; Monzawī, *Nosḳahā I*, p. 441).

5. *Faras-nāmas* in verse, such as the anonymous *faras-nāma* dedicated to Shah Ṭahmāsb (ed. ‘A. Solṭānī Gordfarāmarzī, Teheran, 1366 Š./1987).

**Plate I.** On the characteristics of black horses with white patches, from the *Faras-nāma-ye hendī* (a translation of the Sanskrit *Sālihōtra*), MS London, Wellcome Institute, WMS.Per.47(A), f. 7a (undated). Courtesy of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.

**Plate II.** On the characteristics of white horses with a shade of black, from the *Faras-nāma-ye hendī*, MS London, Wellcome Institute, WMS.Per.559, f. 18a (dated 1218/1803). Courtesy of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.

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